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THE FOUR RIVERS OF EDEN IN THE
APOCALYPSE OF PAUL (VISIO PAULI):
THE INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF
GEN 2:10–14 AND THE *APOCALYPSE OF PAUL* 23

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The influence of the Old Testament and early Jewish literature on the *Visio Pauli* is enormous. However, it is not always clear whether this influence has come directly from early Jewish sources or, indirectly, via Christian mediation.¹ In this paper, I have restricted myself to one aspect of this influence, i.e. the biblical book of Genesis. In the *Apocalypse of Paul* 3–10; 45, in particular, elements of Genesis 1–3, the creation story and the story of Paradise are easy to determine. Moreover, in the intervening chapters, references to the story of Paradise can also be picked out, while echoes of other texts from Genesis can also be found throughout the *Apocalypse*. Therefore, I will narrow the subject down further and focus on the four rivers of Eden (Gen 2:10–14). I intend to explore the inter-textual relationship between Genesis 2:10–14 and the *Apocalypse of Paul* 23, and answer the questions: in which form does the text of Genesis occur in the *Vis. Paul* 23, and how can the differences between both texts be explained?

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¹ See A. Hilhorst, “A Visit to Paradise. Apocalypse of Paul 45 and Its Background,” in: G.P. Luttikhuisen (ed.), *Paradise Interpreted. Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity* (TBN, 2; Leiden, 1999), 128–139. In this article he shows how much the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul* owes to the conceptual universe of early Judaism, viz. with regard to the location and inhabitants of Paradise. In the notes to the edition of three Latin texts of the *Visio Pauli*, Hilhorst and Silverstein refer profusely not only to the New, but also to the Old Testament. However, they restrict themselves to evident quotations of biblical texts. Broader allusions to and echoes of biblical texts are not mentioned, neither are quotations of and allusions to para-biblical texts. Cf. T. Silverstein – A. Hilhorst, *Apocalypse of Paul. A New Critical Edition of Three Long Latin Versions* (Cahiers d’Orientalisme, 21; Geneva, 1997).

GENESIS 2:10–14

The second creation story of the Hebrew Bible (Gen 2:4b–25) describes the creation of man, the garden, and man's helpers (first the animals and then the woman). In this story, the man who has been given access to the Garden is prohibited from eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Within the framework of this contribution, I shall confine myself to the part of the creation story that describes the four rivers of the Garden (Gen 2:10–14). According to some, this description interrupts the narrative of the creation story, and therefore these verses reflect a different (older) source than the rest of the chapter.² According to others, the enumeration of the rivers can be compared to the genealogies of Genesis 1–11. It need not be secondary in the narrative.³ It relates the present reality to its ultimate source in primeval history.

I consider the Masoretic text of Gen 2:10–14 hypothetically as the original text of the last redaction. This text runs, in translation, as follows:

Genesis 2:10–14 (*RSV, with some slight alterations*)

- 10a A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden,
- b and from there it divided
- c and became four rivers.
- 11a The name of the first is Pison;
- b it is the one which flows around the whole land of Havilah,
- c where there is gold;
- 12a and the gold of that land is good;
- b bdellium and onyx stone are there.
- 13a And the name of the second river is Gihon;
- b it is the one which flows around the whole land of Cush.
- 14a And the name of the third river is Tigris,
- b which flows east of Assyria.
- c And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

² Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC, 1; Waco, Texas, 1987), 64. See already J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin 1899³; 1963⁴); K. Budde, *Die biblische Urgeschichte (Gen 1–12:5) untersucht* (Giessen, 1883), 46–88 (esp. 82–83); *Id.*, *Die biblische Paradiesgeschichte* (BZAW, 60; Giessen, 1932), 24–27.

³ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (BKAT I,1; Neukirchen, 1999⁴), 293–295; cf. G.W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL, 1; Grand Rapids, MI, 1983), 52.

The text of Gen 2:10 seems to speak about one common source river that flows out of some place in Eden (וְנָהָר יֵצֵא מֵעֵדֶן), then enters the garden to water it (לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת הַגָּן).⁴ However, if Eden and the garden are conterminous, the river must have risen in the garden.⁵ The verb יֵצֵא can be used here not so much in the sense of “to flow out,” but as the welling of a stream at its source (cf. Exod 17:6; Num 20:11; Judg 15:19; Ezek 47:1; Zech 14:8; Joel 4:18).⁶ “From there” (מִשָּׁם) should probably be understood in the sense of “thereafter.” After it had left the garden, it divided into four rivers.⁷ The text speaks about אַרְבַּעָה רִאשִׁים, which literally means “four heads.” It could mean four elevations, higher places within the river,⁸ but also “four beginnings,”⁹ or “four branches.”¹⁰ There is one common source river in the Garden of Eden for the four rivers that stream out of Eden. Moreover, three of the rivers are connected with specific countries. The Pison is connected with the land of Havila, and the Tigris with Assyria, be it the land, the capital, or the inhabitants. The Gihon surrounds the whole land of Cush. In the Bible, the name Cush is usually reserved for the area south of Egypt, i.e. Nubia and Ethiopia.¹¹ Egypt and the Nile seem to fall outside the scope of the text.¹²

It is by no means sure to which text form the author of the *Apocalypse* had access. Therefore, we should also take into account

⁴ E.g., Budde, *Paradiesgeschichte*, 27.

⁵ Wenham, *Genesis*, 64.

⁶ Cf. J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1910), 59.

⁷ Cf. Skinner, *Genesis*, 59; Westermann, *Genesis*, 295; Wenham, *Genesis*, 64. According to Renckens the division should be placed *inside* the garden. Cf. H. Renckens, *Israëls visie op het verleden. Over Genesis 1–3* (Woord en beleving, 4; Tiel, 1956), 155.

⁸ *ThWAT* VII, 279.

⁹ Cf. the translation of the Septuaginta (ἀρχαί). This is interpreted by Philo in the sense of “four principles.” There is also one reading in Old Latin, which has “in quator initia.”

¹⁰ Cf. Skinner, *Genesis*, 59; Westermann, *Genesis*, 295; Wenham, *Genesis*, 64–65. So also *ThWAT*, II, 707.

¹¹ Cf. Esther 1:1; Isa 11:11; 18:1; Zeph 2:1; 2:12. Some differentiate between African Cush and Arabian Cush. Because of the reference to the Euphrates and the Tigris, some think that Cush in Gen 2:13 refers to some area in Mesopotamia. C.H. Fleder, *Troubling Biblical Waters* (Maryknoll, 1989); E. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians* (Oxford, 1973).

¹² Only later are the Gihon and the Nile identified. See LXX Jer 2:18; Ben Sira 24:27; *Jub* 8:15; Josephus, *Ant.* I:39. For the mythical world view of the author of Genesis 2, see G. Hölscher, *Drei Erdkarten* (Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 1944–48, 3; Heidelberg, 1949), 35–44.

the Septuagint Gen 2:10–14 insofar as it deviates from the Hebrew text.¹³ In general, the Septuagint translates its *Vorlage* of Gen 2:10–14 quite literally. With regard to Gen 2:10 (“A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four beginnings”), there are some minor deviations. Firstly, the participle form of נצַי is replaced by a finite form of the verb (ἐκτορεύεται). Secondly, the two phrases of the Hebrew יִפְרֹד וַיְהִי לֵ (‘‘it divided and became’’) are replaced by one phrase ἀφορίζεται εἰς (‘‘It divided into’’). The translation of ראשִׁים, which probably means ‘‘branches,’’ is translated as ἀρχάς (‘‘beginnings’’). The river divides itself into four beginnings, probably in the sense of four branches.¹⁴ With regard to Gen 2:11–14, I shall refer first to the names of the rivers. Φισών (Phison) may be considered a transcription of the Hebrew פִּישׁוֹן. The same can be said of Γηών (Geon), which is a transcription of the Hebrew גִּיחֹן. With regard to the Hebrew הַדִּקְלָה the Septuagint offers the geographical meaning of the word, i.e., Τίγρις (Tigris), as is the case with the Hebrew פְּרָת, which is translated as Εὐφράτης (Euphrates). With regard to the countries the rivers surround, some observations can be made. The land of הַחַוִּילָה is transcribed as Εὐιλάτ, probably because the author could not identify it. The land of כּוּשׁ, is translated as Αἰθιοπία. This is in line with the Hebrew Bible, where the name Cush is usually reserved for the area south of Egypt, i.e. Nubia and Ethiopia.¹⁵ It supports the identification of Gihon with the Nile. In the Hebrew text, it is not quite clear whether Assyria means the land or the capital,¹⁶ whereas the Septuagint links the Tigris not to the land or the country but to the inhabitants (κατέναντι Ἀσσυρίων).¹⁷

¹³ The preserved readings of the Old Latin texts of Gen 2:10–14 more or less follow the Septuagint.

¹⁴ M. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW, 223; Berlin, 1993), 64; M. Alexandre, *Le Commencement du Livre Genèse I–V. La version grecque de la Septante et sa réception* (Christianisme antique, 3; Paris, 1988), 262. The four ἀρχάς are interpreted by Philo in the sense of ‘‘four principles.’’

¹⁵ See note 10.

¹⁶ Westermann, *Genesis*, 298.

¹⁷ According to Rösel, this might reflect the translator hinting at the fact that the city of Assur after the destruction by the Medes was without meaning. Cf. Rösel, *Übersetzung*, 66.

APOCALYPSE OF PAUL 23

In the *Apocalypse of Paul*, four rivers appear for the first time in the description of Paul's first visit to Paradise (*Vis. Paul* 19–30). In *Vis. Paul* 23 the rivers surround the City of Christ: "And there were twelve gates in the circuit of the city, of great beauty, and four rivers which encircled it. There was a river of honey, and a river of milk, and a river of wine, and a river of oil."¹⁸ They all flow for those who are in this land of Promise. These four rivers are identified with the four rivers of Gen 2:10–14, as it is said: "the river of honey is called Pison, and the river of milk Euphrates, and the river of oil Gihon, and the river of wine Tigris."

The reference to the rivers establishes an explicit connection between *Vis. Paul* 23 and Gen 2:10–14. Nevertheless, the differences between both texts are obvious. Firstly, the order in which the four rivers are mentioned is different, in that the Euphrates, which is the fourth river in Gen 2:10–14, is relocated to second place in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, between the Pison and the Gihon. The order of their qualities seems to be more important than the exact reproduction of the order of these rivers in Genesis.

Secondly, it does not speak about a common source river for the four rivers. It is not clear where the rivers come from. They do not enter the garden, nor do they divide themselves afterwards. In the direct context, the *Apocalypse* speaks of a river which forms the base of the beginning of the foundation of the firmament, or the gates of heaven, a river which waters all the earth, which is the ocean that surrounds the whole earth (*Vis. Paul* 21; 31). However, there is no direct connection in the text between this river and the four rivers.

Thirdly, the countries that the rivers surround (Havila, Cush, Assyria) are not mentioned either. Instead, they surround the City of Christ. The location of this city can be derived from the context. It is situated close to the Acherusian Lake, probably inside it (cp. 22: "This is the Acherusian Lake where is the City of Christ"; cp. 23: "And he was standing on the Acherusian Lake and he put me into a golden ship and about three thousand angels were singing a

¹⁸ All translations are taken from J.K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford, 1993), 616–644.

hymn before me till I arrived at the City of Christ"). According to *Vis. Paul* 24, twelve gates surround the city and there is some space between these gates and the entrance to the city. In between there are trees. The Acherusian Lake in its turn is situated in "the land of promise." This land, including the Acherusian Lake and the city of Christ, is clearly situated outside the heavens. The angels lead Paul upwards to the third heaven (*Vis. Paul* 19), then through a gate into Paradise (*Vis. Paul* 20), from Paradise back to the third heaven, and from the third heaven down to the second heaven, from this heaven to the firmament, to the gates of the heavens. The fundament of these gates is above the river that waters the whole earth, and it is called the ocean. Paul comes *out* of the heavens, and enters the land of promise. This land will be disclosed only when Christ has come to reign there for a thousand years, after which the first earth will disintegrate. Paradise is clearly located above the third heaven. The Land of Promise, with the Acherusian Lake and the City of Christ inside, is located outside the heavens, but is not visible. It is not part of the first earth. The location seems to be outside "normal" space and time.

Finally, the four rivers of Paradise are identified with four qualities, or substances (honey, milk, wine and oil), meant for various groups of righteous people who, having passed away, are now living in the City of Christ. In the ensuing chapters (*Vis. Paul* 25–28), the author elaborates on these rivers in a slightly different order. The river of honey is the place where the minor and major prophets of the Old Testament reside. It is meant for "everyone who shall have afflicted his soul and not done his own will because of God" (*Vis. Paul* 25). The river of milk is the place where all the infants whom Herod slew in the name of Christ dwell. It is meant for "all who keep their chastity and purity" (*Vis. Paul* 26). The river of wine is the place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lot and Job. It is meant for "all who have given hospitality to strangers" (*Vis. Paul* 27). Finally, the river of oil is the place where men rejoice and sing psalms; to this river "all those who rejoice in the Lord God and sing psalms to the Lord" are brought (*Vis. Paul* 28).

Elsewhere, the *Apocalypse* also speaks about "milk and honey" in relation to rivers. *Vis. Paul* 22 speaks about only one river (in that land), "flowing with *milk and honey*, and there were trees planted by the bank of that river, full of fruit; moreover, each single tree bore twelve fruits in the year." In *Vis. Paul* 31 Paul was brought outside the city through the midst of trees and far from the places of the

land of the good, and he was taken across the river of *milk and honey*. Moreover, the text also speaks about a river, whiter than *milk*, which is called the Acherusian Lake, where the City of Christ is, into which not everyone is permitted to enter (*Vis. Paul* 22). Although rivers appear in more places throughout the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the four rivers of Paradise from Gen 2:10–14, besides *Vis. Paul* 23, only appear in *Vis. Paul* 45. However, except for the names of the rivers, there is considerable discrepancy between the descriptions of the rivers in both chapters. *Vis. Paul* 45 is much closer to the biblical text. The sources of the four rivers are connected with Paradise, the place where Adam and his wife erred. They are said to surround the land of Evila, the land of Egypt and Ethiopia, the land of the Assyrians and the land of Mesopotamia. In *Vis. Paul* 45 the rivers do not have specific qualities (honey, milk, wine and oil), meant for those who are in the land of promise. Moreover, the order in which the rivers are mentioned is different: *Vis. Paul* 45 follows the biblical order, whereas *Vis. Paul* 23 deviates from it. When the qualities of the rivers are also included, the author of the *Apocalypse of Paul* provides a different picture with regard to the order of the rivers.¹⁹ Finally, in *Vis. Paul* 23 nothing is said about the sources of the four rivers, whereas in *Vis. Paul* 45 Paul “saw the beginning of the waters,” and he “saw a tree planted from whose roots water flowed out, and from this beginning there were four rivers.” The waters of the river flow forth from the tree, “when the Spirit of God, who is resting on the tree, blows.”

THE BACKGROUND TO THE DIFFERENCES

I now would like to go into the question of how the differences between the descriptions of the four rivers in Genesis 2:10–14 and in *Vis. Paul* 23 can be explained. Are there texts or traditions that

¹⁹ The following table summarises the different orders of the rivers:

<i>Vis. Paul</i> 23 (line 24)	<i>Apc Pl</i> 23 (line 30–33)	<i>Apc Pl</i> 25–28	<i>Apc Pl</i> 45 (cf. Gen 2:10–14)
1. river of honey	1. Pison, river of honey	1. river of honey (25)	1. Pison
2. river of milk	2. <i>Euphrates</i> , river of milk	2. river of milk (26)	2. Gihon
3. river of wine	3. Gihon, river of oil	3. river of wine (27)	3. Tigris
4. river of oil	4. Tigris, <i>river of wine</i>	4. river of oil (28)	4. Euphrates

may have influenced the author of the *Apocalypse* when he used the biblical text of Gen 2:10–14? I shall confine myself to two aspects of these differences. Firstly, the connection between the four rivers of Paradise and the city, and secondly, the different qualities which are attributed to the rivers. I will look in the Old Testament, in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament to discover whether we can find a proper Jewish background for these aspects of the *Apocalypse of Paul*.

THE FOUR RIVERS AND THE CITY OF CHRIST

In *Vis. Paul* 23, a paradisiacal motif (the four rivers) is connected with the motif of a city ("City of Christ"). This should not cause much surprise since the connection is an old one. Although the four rivers of Paradise are not mentioned outside Genesis 2 in the Hebrew Bible,²⁰ texts occur in which rivers are connected with a city, usually the abode of YHWH, i.e., Jerusalem, or Sion. I refer to the following texts: Ps 36:9–10 ("They feast on the abundance of *thy house* (ביתך), and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights [נחל עדניך] [חשקם]. For with thee is the fountain of life [מקור חיים]; in thy light so we see light"); 46:5 ("There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God [נהר פלני שמחו עיר אלהים], the holy habitation of the Most High"); 65:10 ("The river of God is full of water" [פלג אלהים מלא מים]);²¹ 87:7 ("All my springs are in you" [כל מעיני כך]);²² Isa 33:21 ("There, rather, YHWH will be mighty for us; it is a place of rivers, broad streams [מקום נהרים יארים רחבי ידים], where no galley with oars can go, no stately ship can pass");²³ Ezek 47:1 ("Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple [והנה מים יצאים מתחת מפתח הבית] toward the east—

²⁰ The Septuagint of Jeremiah 2:18 mentions the Gihon.

²¹ According to some the river of God reflects here the idea of a conduit for rainwater from reservoirs above the heavens down to earth (cf. Job 38:25; Deut 11:11). It is also possible, however, that it is an allusion to the motif of the fountain in the temple. Cf. H.-J. Krauss, *Psalmen. 2. Teilband. Psalmen 60–150* (BKAT, XV/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1978⁵), 613; M.E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC, 20; Waco, Tex, 1990), 143; F.-L. Hossfeld – E. Zenger, *Psalmen 51–100* (HTKAT; Freiburg, 2000), 218.

²² The addressed one is Zion (cf. Ps 87:5).

²³ We consider "place" (מקום) to be in apposition to "there" (שם) rather than to YHWH. Thus, the imagery presents Jerusalem as surrounded by water but protected from attack from any hostile fleet.

for the temple faced east—and the water was flowing down [והמים ירדים] from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar”); Joel 4:18b (“And a fountain shall come forth from the house of YHWH and water the valley of Shittim” [ומעין מבית יהוה יצא והשקה אתן] [נחל השטים]; Zech 14:8 (“On that day living water shall flow out from Jerusalem [יצאון מים חיים מירושלם], half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea; it shall continue in summer and in winter”). These texts reflect the motif of *the fountain of the Temple*. According to this motif, living waters will go forth from the abode of God, guaranteeing the survival of nature and society.

The motif of a fountain that flows out from the abode of a God occurs in the whole of the Ancient Near East.²⁴ Several mythological conceptions seems to play a role, for example, the king of the gods who resides at the mountain of the gods, and from there keeps away chaos and creates the cosmos. At the mountain of the gods, the fountains of life that make a paradisiacal life possible, rise.²⁵ Ugaritic texts describe the dwelling of El at the “sources of the Two Rivers, in the midst of the pools of the Double Deep.”²⁶ The four streams leaving Paradise can also be compared with the four streams that often appear in Mesopotamian art,²⁷ for example, the images of a god with an overflowing vase, and of a god from whose body streams flow.²⁸

The background to the motif of the fountain of the Temple in the Hebrew Bible is the identification of the Temple with Eden. The consequence of this identification is an exchange of several motifs (e.g., the holy mountain, the residence of God, fruitful rivers). It is nevertheless difficult to find a place in the Hebrew Bible where Eden is *explicitly* related to the Temple. Nowhere is the word “temple,” the “Holy of Holies,” or the “dwelling-place of the Lord” used in connection with Eden. Only once is Eden related to a restored “Zion”

²⁴ The material is collected by M. Metzger, “Gottheit, Berg und Vegetation in der vorderorientalischen Bildtradition,” *ZDPV* 99 (1983) 54–94. See also I. Cornelius, “Paradise Motifs in the Eschatology of the Minor Prophets and the Iconography of the Ancient Near East. The Concepts of Fertility, Water, Trees, and ‘Tierfrieden’ and Genesis 2–3,” *JNSL* 14 (1988) 41–83.

²⁵ Cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Ma, 1972).

²⁶ *CTA* 17; vi 47. Cf., e.g., Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 48, 159.

²⁷ Cf. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 100–103.

²⁸ See O. Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament. Am Beispiel der Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1977²), 104, 122; Metzger, “Gottheit,” 78; Hossfeld-Zenger, *Psalmen 51–100*, 559.

(Isa 51:3a), and once to the “holy mountain” (Ezek 28:13–14); Eden is related a few times to the “land” (Ezek 36:35; Joel 2:3). With regard to the motif of the fountain of the Temple, the texts above show an *implicit* connection between Zion and Eden, in that fruitful rivers are related to the city. Textual similarities between these texts and Gen 2:10–14 are restricted by the occurrence of the verb צא (Ezek 47:1; Joel 4:18; Zech 14:8), the *hif’il* form of the verb שקה (Ps 36:9; Joel 4:18), a word for “river” (נהר in Ps 46:5; cf. Isa 33:21; or a parallel word נחל in Ps 36:9; מעין in Joel 4:18; Ps 87:7; מים in Ezek 47:1; מים חיים in Zech 14:8), and the theme of general fertility (Ps 36:9; 65:10–11; Joel 4:18; Ezek 47:1–12).

At several points in early Jewish literature, there is a relation between the Garden of Eden and the Temple. In *1 Enoch* 24–27 is a section about the tree of life and the middle of the earth. It describes Jerusalem. In 25:3 “the throne of the Lord” is mentioned, in 25:5 “the house of the Lord, the eternal King,” and in 26:1 “the middle of the earth.”²⁹ The passage probably describes the new Jerusalem. In the description, much Edenic imagery from Genesis 2–3 and Ezek 28:11–19 is used.³⁰ In 24:1, the mountain of fire is reminiscent of Ezek 28:14; the precious and beautiful stones in 24:2 refer to Ezek 28:13. The description of the tree in 24:5 is very similar to Gen 2:9; 3:6. In 25:4–5 the tree of life appears, but with a remarkable difference to Genesis 2–3. Finally, the place is well watered: “And there I saw a holy mountain; underneath the mountain . . . there was a stream which was flowing in the direction of the north.” In this passage we have a clear example of a connection between the Garden of Eden and the Temple. It is curious, however, that neither the words “Zion” nor “Jerusalem” are mentioned, nor the word “(Garden of) Eden.” *T. Levi* 18:6 speaks about the heavenly Temple where God resides: “The heavens will be opened, and from the Temple the glory there will come on him.” The new priesthood of this Temple is related to Eden (18:10). Also, in *T. Dan* 5:12 there is a connection between a future Jerusalem and Eden: “And the saints will rest in Eden and the righteous will rejoice in the new Jerusalem which will be the glory of God for ever.”³¹ The connection with the new Jerusalem

²⁹ The last expression is borrowed from Ezek 5:5; 38:12, which refers to Jerusalem as the navel of the earth (cf. *Jub* 8:12, 19).

³⁰ See J.C. VanderKam, *Enoch. A Man for All Generations* (Studies on the Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia, S.C.), 55–58.

³¹ Cf. also *4 Ezra* 8:52 (“Because it is for you that *Paradise* is opened, the tree

points to the identification of both with Eden. In *Greek Life of Adam and Eve* 29:1–6, Adam asked the angels to take fragrances from Paradise, so that after he had been driven out of Paradise he could continue to bring offerings to God. In all these passages in early Jewish literature, Eden is associated with the *future* temple. This is also the case in some Qumran texts where the expression מקדש אדם is used (4Q174; 4Q265; 4Q421). The expression could mean a sanctuary built by men, or a sanctuary consisting of men.³² According to some, however, this should be identified as Eden, that is to say, it is an epithet for the Garden of Eden.³³

Also, in Apoc 22:1–2 the new Jerusalem is described with imagery associated with the Garden of Eden: “Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.” The river of living water flowing from the throne fits very well with the motif of the source of the Temple which was pointed out in the Hebrew Bible. In particular, the influence of Ezek 47:1–12 can be detected in the passage from Apoc 22:1–2.

THE RIVERS AND THEIR QUALITIES

In the Old Testament there is no explicit relationship between the four Rivers of Eden and the qualities mentioned. However, sometimes rivers, or streams, are mentioned in relation to the substances honey, milk, and wine. Firstly, consider Joel 4:18, which describes an abundance of wine, milk and water. At the end of the book this announces

of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom is perfected beforehand”). The new Jerusalem and Paradise also appears connected in 2 Bar 4:3–7.

³² Cf. D. Dimant, “4QFlorilegium and the Idea of the Community as Temple,” in: A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, J. Riaud (eds.), *Hellenica et Judaica. Hommage à Valentin Nikipowezky* (Leuven, 1986), 165–189; G.J. Brooke, “Miqdash Adam, Eden and the Qumran Community,” in B. Ego, A. Lange, P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel. Community without Temple* (WUNT, 118; Tübingen, 1999), 285–301.

³³ J.C. Baumgarten, “Purification after Childbirth and the Sacred Garden in 4Q265 and Jubilees,” in G.J. Brooke, F. García Martínez (eds.), *New Qumran Texts and Studies. Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992* (Leiden, 1994), 3–10 (esp. 8–10); M.O. Wise, “4QFlorilegium and the Temple of Adam,” *RevQ* 15 (1991–92) 103–132.

a new future, which should be considered as the opposite of the drought and thirst during the catastrophe described at the beginning of the book.³⁴ The text of Joel 4:18 reads as follows:

Joel 4:18

18a	And in that day
b	the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
c	and the hills shall flow with milk,
d	and all the stream beds of Judah
e	shall flow with water;
f	and a fountain shall come forth from the house YHWH
g	and water the valley of Shittim.

Strictly speaking, the combination of the four rivers of Paradise and their four qualities does not occur in this text, nor the attribution of one of these four substances to a river. The dripping (דָּלַדַּל) of young wine and the flowing (לָלַח = “to go”) of milk are to be considered, in any case, as metaphors for fruitful vineyards and milking stock. The first promise (Joel 4:18b) refers to vineyards growing on mountain slopes and bearing fruit abundantly. The abundance of wine is contrary to the beginning of the book of Joel, where it is said that young wine is cut off from the mouths of drinkers of wine (Joel 1:5), and that wine fails (Joel 1:10). The second promise (Joel 4:18c) refers to the large flocks that could again give milk abundantly because they had sufficient grass. Also, this promise contrasts with the judgement at the beginning of the book, where it is said that “the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep are dismayed” (Joel 1:18). The third promise (Joel 4:18de) functions as the cause of the first and second promises, in that plentiful water is conditional for the growth of the vineyards and the pasture. The abundance of water is also in contrast with the beginning of the book, which speaks of an extreme drought (cf. Joel 1:20). The motif of the streams full of water that results in new fertility, and an abundance of wine and milk, is connected with the motif of the fountain of the Temple, as

³⁴ Cf. W. Rudolph, *Joel, Amos, Obadja, Jona* (BKAT, XIII, 2; Gütersloh, 1971), 86; H.W. Wolff, *Dodekapropheten 2. Joel und Amos* (BK, XIV 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1975²); W. van der Meer, *Oude woorden worden nieuw. De opbouw van het boek Joël* (Kampen, 1989), 238–241; C. van Leeuwen, *Joël* (POT; Nijkerk, 1993), 206–212; J.L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB, 24C; New York, 1995), 198–199.

seen above. On the one hand, the fountain that comes forth from the house of YHWH is the guarantee of the fruitfulness of the land (cf. Joel 4:18a–e), and on the other, the fountain gives water to the valley of Shittim.³⁵

Secondly, consider Amos 9:13, which describes the abundance in the New Age with relation to the restoration of the people and the renewal of the land.

Amos 9:13

13a Behold, the days are coming
 b says YHWH
 c when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper,
 d and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed;
 e the mountains shall drip sweet wine,
 f and the hills shall flow with it.

A combination of a river and one of the four substances does not occur in this text. Only the dripping (נטף) of young wine and the flowing (מונ) of it. Amos 9:13e is nearly identical to Joel 4:18b, with the exception of the form of the verb (יטפו instead of טפו). The situation described is in sharp contrast to its treatment in the oracles of judgement earlier in the book of Amos. There the relationship with vineyards bearing abundant fruit is made explicitly in 9:14 (“They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine”). The texts focus on the last days, in which “the booth of David that is fallen” will be raised up (9:11).

Furthermore, two texts from the Book of Job refer to some sort of relationship between rivers and their specific qualities, Job 20:17 and 29:6. Job 20:17 is very difficult from a text critical point of view. The Hebrew text runs as follows: אֵל יֵרָא בַּפִּלְנוֹת נְהַרִי/נְחָלִי דְּבֶשׂ וְחִמָּאָה. The translation in the RSV is as follows: “He will not look upon the rivers/the streams flowing with honey and curds.” In this translation the verb רָאָה followed by the preposition ב is translated as “look upon.” According to others the construction sometimes means “look at with pleasure.” According to Blommerde, “to enjoy” better describes its meaning.³⁶ Others seem to treat רָאָה as an equivalent

³⁵ This could refer to the wood that was needed for the Temple, see Van der Meer, *Oude woorden*, 239–240.

³⁶ A.C.M. Blommerde, *North Semitic Grammar and Job* (Biblica et Orientalia, 22; Rome, 1969), 90; D.J.A. Clines, *Job 1–20* (WBC, 17; Dallas, Tx, 1989), 475, 490.

of the verb רוה “saturate.”³⁷ The sequence of the words פלנות נהרי (“rivers of streams of brooks of honey”) forms an unusually long chain of *status constructus* connections. The Masoretic accentuation distinguishes between פלנות and נהרי. The BHS, as well as the translation in the RSV, follows this accentuation in the division of the lines. In this way, the verse is irregularly divided into two lines (i.e., two stresses in the first line, and four in the second colon). The second line seems to be interpreted as an apposition to פלנות (“He will not look upon rivers, streams of brooks of honey”).

In my opinion, it is better to divide the verse into two regular lines of three stresses each: אל ירא בפלנות נהרי / נחלי דבש וחמאה. The meaning of פלנות נהרי (“channels of streams”) however, remains problematic in this pattern of division. Several exegetes have emended נהרי (“streams”) into צהר (“oil”).³⁸ The meaning of the construction פלנות צהר is in that case “rivers of oil.” From the point of view of textual criticism, the proposed emendation is not attractive because of the substantial graphic alteration that is necessary in order to change נהרי into צהר. However, it may be possible to read נהר as a noun, meaning “oil,” being derived from the root נהר (“to shine”).³⁹ The final ם could be read as a ן and connected with the next word. Therefore, I propose the following translation: “He will enjoy no streams of oil, nor torrents of honey and cream.”

In this interpretation of the partly reconstructed version of MT Job 20:17, one finds three of the four relevant substances: “oil,” “honey” and “cream.” The Hebrew vocabulary differs somewhat from more commonly used words. I refer to נהר (“oil”) instead of חלב (“milk”). It is true that the text does not mention the four rivers of paradise, but the connection of streams and rivers with the substances does occur. That honey also flows is considered by some as quite exceptional.⁴⁰ However, the liquidity of honey could be one of its qualities.⁴¹

³⁷ E.g., N.H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job. A New Commentary* (Jerusalem, revised edition 1967) 314: “He shall not drink his fill from . . .”

³⁸ So, e.g., H.H. Rowley, *Job* (The Century Bible; London, 1970), 179; J.H. Kroeze, *Het Boek Job* (COT; Kampen, 1961), 233; P. van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism and Poetry in the Book of Job* (OTS, 32; Leiden, 1999), 231.

³⁹ So also Blommerde, *Grammar*, 90; R. Gordis, *The Book of Job* (New York, 1978), 217.

⁴⁰ Cf. Clines, *Job*, 491.

⁴¹ Cf. N. Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage* (Kiryat Ono, 1980).

Although a word for “river” is used in the original text of Job 20:17, it seems that it does not refer to concrete, geographic rivers, but to the river as an image of abundance.

A direct influence of Job 20:17 on the *Apocalypse of Paul* is unlikely. Apart from the fact that Job 20:17 does not refer to the rivers of Paradise, nor to the rivers of a city, the translation of the LXX deviates somewhat from the Hebrew Text. The LXX Job 20:17 runs as follows: “May he not see the milking of the cattle, nor the distribution of honey and cream”.⁴² The Old Latin of Job 20:17 follows more or less the Septuagint: “He did not see milk of the cattle, nor food, honey and cream” (*Et non videat mulcturam pecorum, neque pabula, mellis & butyri*).⁴³

Finally, the Hebrew text of Job 29:6 reads as follows: בְּרַחֵץ הַלֵּיכִי / בַּחֲמָה וְצֹרֵר יִצּוֹק עַמְדִּי פִלְנִי שֶׁמֶן. The translation in the RSV is as follows: “When my steps were washed with milk, / and the rocks poured out for me streams of oil!” The division of this verse into the cola found in the BHS and the RSV is in accordance with the most obvious syntactical structure. The Masoretic accentuation points also to this division. The parallelism between both cola (יִצּוֹק / בְּרַחֵץ; שֶׁמֶן / פִּלְנִי; עַמְדִּי / בַּחֲמָה) seems to confirm the division. However, the spread of words over the cola of the verse is rather unbalanced. There are three stresses in the first colon and five in the second. Because of this irregular rhythm, many exegetes consider עַמְדִּי (29:6b) as an explanatory gloss, which slipped into the text of 29:6 because of its occurrence in 29:5.⁴⁴ However, some reference to Job in the first person is needed. It occurs in all the other seven cola (29:2–6a).⁴⁵ Others delete וְצֹרֵר and translate 29:6b as follows: “Where I stood, were flowing streams of oil.”⁴⁶ In this reading, עַמְדִּי (“where I stood,” translated in the RSV as “for me”) is considered as parallel to הַלֵּיכִי (“my steps”).⁴⁷ Although this emendation is attractive, it remains difficult to explain how וְצֹרֵר was inserted in the Masoretic transmission.

⁴² I translate νομας as “roaming,” and νομη as “distribution.” Cf. *LS*, 1178.

⁴³ Cf. P. Sabatier’s edition of the *Vetus Latina*, 867. The Vulgate of Job 20:17 does read some words for river in this context of milk and honey (*non videat rivulos fluminis torrentes mellis et butyri*).

⁴⁴ G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT, 16; Gütersloh, 1963), 406; Rowley, *Job*, 236; H. Stauss, *Hiob 2. Teilband 19,1–42,17* (BKAT, XVI/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2002), 186.

⁴⁵ Cf. Gordis, *Job*, 319.

⁴⁶ Cf. P. van der Lugt, *Rhetorical criticism*, 286–287.

⁴⁷ Cf. Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 411.

Moreover, the Septuagint probably had צורי in its *Vorlage* (τὰ ὄρη μου, "my mountains"). Also attractive is Dahood's proposal to read 29:6 as follows: ברחץ הליכי בחמה וצורי/צוק עמדי פלני שמן ("My steps were bathed in butter *and mastic*/streams of oil were flowing over my legs"). It is not clear, however, whether צרי (mastic, resin of *Pistacia mutica*, used for medicinal purposes, or for incense; cf. Jer 8:22; 46:11; 51:8) was suited to the bathing of feet.⁴⁸ Despite the problems with regard to the rhythm, I propose the retention of the Masoretic text, including the accentuation. The longer colon (29:6b) could perhaps be explained by the fact that it is the last colon of the section 29:2–6, and therefore functions as an end. As far as the content of Job 29:6 is concerned, the just Job is speaking metaphorically in saying that he shares completely the blessings of God.⁴⁹ The images used are analogous to the portrayal of abundance elsewhere (cf. Job 20:17; Gen 49:11; Exod 3:8; Deut 32:13–14; 33:24; Ps 81:17).⁵⁰ There is no clear connection with *Vis. Paul* 23 nor with the rivers of Paradise. The only objection that can be made is that the image of the flowing of oil and milk had probably become part of the stock metaphorical language of ancient Israel for describing well-being.

In the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament there are two texts that might be relevant in this respect, i.e., Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) 24:25–27 and 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch* 8:5–6.⁵¹

I shall start with the text of Ben Sira.⁵²

⁴⁸ Cf. OTS on Job.

⁴⁹ Cf. Fohrer, *Hiob*, 406; Strauss, *Hiob*, 186.

⁵⁰ In addition, there is the metaphor used in the Song of Songs 5:12 ("His eyes are like doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, fitly set") which is used in the sense of pure pleasantness and well-being.

⁵¹ 5 *Ezra* 2:18–19 may also be relevant in this respect: "I will send you help, my servants Isaiah and Jeremiah. According to their counsel I have consecrated and prepared for you *twelve trees loaded with various fruits and the same number of springs flowing with milk and honey*, and seventy mighty mountains on which roses and lilies grow; by these I will fill your children with joy." However, it is not certain that 5 *Ezra* 2:18–19 preceded the *Apocalypse of Paul*, since it should be dated to the second half of the third century. Moreover, it seems to be of Christian origin. In the *New Testament* there is no connection between the four rivers and the substances. According to Ginzberg, the four rivers should occur in *Rabbinic Literature*, i.e., in *Pesikta Rabbati* 38 (163a), a text that is much later than the *Apocalypse of Paul*. When the passage in *Pesikta Rabbati* 38 is examined, there is no reference to four rivers whatsoever.

⁵² For an analysis of Ben Sira 24:23–29, see J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (BBB, 37; Bonn, 1971), 77–81; M. Gilbert, "L'éloge de la Sagesse (Siracide 24)," *RTL* 5 (1974) 326–348 (esp. 336–341);

Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) 24:23–30 (tr. NEB, with some slight alterations)

- 23a All this is the covenant-book of God Most-High,
 b the law which Moses enacted to be the heritage of the
 assemblies of Jacob.
 25a He sends out wisdom in full flood like *the river Pison*
 b or like *the Tigris* at the time of the first-fruits;
 26a he overflows with understanding like *the Euphrates*
 b or like the Jordan at the time of harvest.
 27a He pours forth instruction like the Nile,
 b like *the Gihon* at the time of the vintage.
 28a The first human never knew fully wisdom;
 bf from first to last no one has fathomed her;
 29a for her thoughts are vaster than the ocean
 b and her purpose deeper than the great abyss.
 30a As for me, I was like a canal leading from a river,
 b a watercourse into a pleasure-garden . . .

In this passage about wisdom, the names of the four rivers of Paradise are mentioned (Pison, Tigris, Euphrates, Gihon) together with the names of some other rivers (Jordan, Nile),⁵³ and with some other terminology that refers to the story of Eden, for example “the first man” in v. 28, and the “pleasure-garden” in v. 30.⁵⁴ Wisdom is connected with *nomos*, the Law of Moses, which seems to be the law as a literary entity, namely the Pentateuch.⁵⁵ There is a connection between Law and Wisdom, although they are not identified.⁵⁶ The

H. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter. Eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vormakkabäischen Sofer unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester-, Propheten- und Weisheitslehrertum* (WUNT, 2.6; Tübingen, 1980), 247–252; B. Ego, “Der Strom der Tora. Zur Rezeption eines tempeltheologischen Motivs in frühjüdischer Zeit,” in B. Ego, A. Lange, P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Gemeinde ohne Tempel. Community without Temple. Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (WUNT, 118; Tübingen, 1999), 205–214 (esp. 206–208).

⁵³ The order of the rivers is different from Gen. 2:10–14 in that the second river (Gihon) is placed at the end of the passage. It could function as a sort of inclusion. The first and the last river bracket the rest of the rivers to make them appear as additional streams of paradise. Cf. G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct. A Study in Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW, 151; Berlin, 1981), 68–71. The Jordan is used probably because of Gen. 13:10, where the plain of the Jordan is compared to the Garden of Eden (“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jordan valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of YHWH”). The Nile is introduced, probably because of the double association of the Gihon. This river is identified either with the Nile, or with a river in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

⁵⁴ Cf. also 24:31 “I will water my garden.”

⁵⁵ Marböck, *Weisheit*, 77; Stadelmann, *Ben Sira*, 250; Cf. 24:23a: “the covenant-book of God Most-High”; 24:23b is nearly a verbatim quotation of Deut 33:4.

⁵⁶ Ego, “Strom,” 207.

Law is presented as the source of Wisdom. This is elaborated in the use of the rivers. Wisdom, understanding, and instruction come forth from the source (i.e., the Law) and now flow abundantly like the rivers of Paradise. The rivers, used as an image of abundance, are not identified themselves as rivers of wine, or any other substance. It is only *in the time* of the harvest that they are full of water: Pison and Tigris are full in the days of the first-fruits (24:25); Euphrates and Jordan overflow in the days of the harvest (24:26); Nile and Gihon pour out in the days of the vintage (24:27). Although the author of Ben Sira uses metaphorical language, it is nevertheless the first time that the four rivers of paradise are explicitly related to fruit, especially to the first-fruits and to wine. The Gihon itself is connected here with the vintage, whereas in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, it is connected with oil while the river of wine is the Tigris.

In *Ben Sira* 24:25–29, Wisdom is identified with the Torah and compared to the rivers of Paradise. In 24:30–34, the instruction of Wisdom by Ben Sira is described by using metaphors of water and rivers. Wisdom is localised on Mount Sion (24:10–11). Moreover, Ben Sira 24:30–31 is alluding to Ezek 47:1–12, according to which the source of the waters is in the Temple.⁵⁷ In this way, Ben Sira combines the motif of the rivers of paradise (24:23–29) with the motif of the water that flows out from the city of God and the Temple (24:30–34). One might suggest that Ben Sira identifies Jerusalem and the Temple with the Garden of Eden.⁵⁸

The text of the longer recension of 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch* 8:4–6 runs in translation as follows:⁵⁹

2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch* 8:4–6

- 4b And it [= the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden] covers the whole of Paradise.
- c And it has something of every orchard tree and every fruit.
- d And its root is in Paradise at the exit that leads to the earth.
- 5a And Paradise is in between the corruptible and the incorruptible.
- b And two streams come forth, one a source of honey and milk, and a source which produces oil and wine.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., O. Rickenbacher, *Weisheitsperikopen bei Ben Sira* (OBO 1; Freiburg, 1973), 168–169; Gilbert, “L’*éloge*,” 340; Égo, “*Strom*,” 209.

⁵⁸ Cf. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, 2, 1192f.; Görg., *Eden*, NBL I, 467.

⁵⁹ The translation of the longer recension is taken from M. Pravednou, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch,” in: J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, I, (London, 1983), 91–213 (esp. 114–116).

- c And it is divided into 4 parts,
- d and they go around with a quiet movement
- 6a And they come out into the Paradise of Eden, between the corruptible and the incorruptible.
- b And from there they pass along
- c and they divide into 40 parts.
- d And it proceeds in descent along the earth,
- e and they have a revolution in their cycle, just like the other atmospheric elements.

This is the first text in which rivers are explicitly connected and identified with the four substances mentioned in the *Apocalypse of Paul* (honey and milk, oil and wine). Although the rivers are not mentioned by name, it is clear from the context that the four rivers of Paradise are meant. Enoch is sitting in the Third Heaven, and he is looking down at Paradise (8:1). It seems as if the text gives a picture of a double paradise.⁶⁰ A tree is rooted in the earthly garden and rises to the Third Heaven, where it covers Heavenly Paradise. The exit that leads to earth is probably the root of the tree in the Garden of Eden (cf. 8:4: "And its root is in Paradise at the exit that leads to the earth"). The geography of these rivers, however, is somewhat different from the biblical text of Genesis, as well as from the text of the Apocalypse. The four rivers come from two sources, two streams. In Genesis only one river is the source of the four rivers, in *Vis. Paul* 23 no common source of the four rivers is mentioned. In *Vis. Paul* 45 there is a beginning of the four rivers at the roots of the tree. Also, in *2 Enoch* there is a strong connection between the sources of the rivers and a tree, although it is not the same tree as in *Vis. Paul* 45, where it is not the Tree of Life, nor the Tree of Knowledge, but a third kind of tree. In *2 Enoch*, the rivers seem to be already divided before they enter Paradise,⁶¹ and from there, when they leave Paradise and descend to the earth, they are divided again into 40 rivers. In the end they evaporate, and apparently return to Paradise in the form of rain, or perhaps mist. Despite these differences, *2 Enoch* is the first text where there is an explicit identification of the substances with the four rivers of Paradise.

⁶⁰ Cf. C. Böttrich, *Das slawische Henochbuch* (JSHRZ, V/7; Gütersloh, 1996), 848.

⁶¹ Cf. LXX Gen 2:8.

THE FOUR SUBSTANCES (HONEY, MILK, OIL, AND WINE)

In the Old Testament, the word-pair “milk and honey” is a formula to designate the fertility and abundance of the promised land (e.g., Exod 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev 20:24; Num 13:27). These aspects of the promised land are eschatologically interpreted by the author of Paul as aspects of the heavenly paradise. The reversed word order “honey and milk” occurs for the first time in 2 *Enoch* 8:5. As far as the “oil” and “wine” are concerned, they are also gifts of the land, and mentioned either together (cf. Deut 7:13) or apart. There are, however, more gifts of the land, which have not been selected for inclusion by the author of the *Apocalypse*. Also, in early Jewish and Rabbinical literature, “oil” and “wine” are connected with Paradise. In the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*, Seth looked for *oil* for his father Adam in Paradise. In rabbinical literature the streams of oil are not mentioned directly in connection with Eden, but rather as a reward for the righteous just before dying. I refer to *Gen. Rab.* 62:2: “When R. Abbahu was dying he was shown thirteen streams of balsam. Said he to them: For whom are these? They are yours, he was assured. All these are for Abbahu, he exclaimed. “Yet I had thought, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and vanity; yet surely, my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God” (Isa 49:4) “This proves that when the righteous are departing from the world the Holy One, blessed be He, shows their reward.” Ben Azzai expounded: It is written: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Ps 116:15): when does God show them the reward he prepared for them? Just before their death, wherefore it is written: Is the death of his saints.”

The same can be said of *wine*. It is a reward for the righteous just before dying (cf. *b. Sanh* 99a). One can also refer to Matthew 26:29: “I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of wine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” There are some points in rabbinical literature where wine is explicitly related to the Garden of Eden. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Gen 9:20 recounts that Noah “found *a vine which the river* had brought from the Garden of Eden.” See also *Gen. Rab.* 36:3, according to which Noah took with him “into the ark shoots from vines ready for planting as well as shoots from figs and olives.”

Wine is not always related to Paradise in a positive way. There is a rabbinical tradition according to which the tree from which Adam

ate was a vine: "R. Hisda said in the name of R. Uqba (though others say it was Mar Uqba in the name of R. Zakkai): The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Noah: Noah, why did you fail to take a warning from Adam, whose offence was caused by wine? This follows the opinion that the tree from which Adam ate was the vine, as it has been taught: R. Meir said: That tree from which Adam ate was a vine, because only wine brings grief to a man" (*b. Sanh* 70ab).

CONCLUSION

The connection of the four rivers of Paradise to the City of Christ in the *Apocalypse of Paul* was prepared long beforehand. We have referred to texts in the Hebrew Bible in which rivers are mentioned in connection to a city, i.e. the abode of YHWH, Jerusalem or the Temple. These texts, which reflect the motif of the fountain of the Temple according to which living waters spring forth from the residence of God, guaranteeing the survival of nature, have, in fact, deep roots in the literature of the Ancient Near East. Moreover, these texts show an implicit identification of the Temple with the Garden of Eden through which the co-relation of several motifs, in particular that of the fruitful rivers, was made possible. At several points in the early literature and the New Testament, there is a strong connection between the *future* Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden. The connection of the rivers with the substances in *Vis. Paul* 23 shows considerable similarity to *2 Henoch* 8:4–6. However, this motif was prepared long beforehand in the Hebrew Bible, where rivers are placed in relation to several of the substances. The nature of the four substances (i.e., liquids) means that they could flow. The river is a metaphor for abundance. Moreover, oil and wine are gifts which in Jewish tradition are connected with the Garden of Eden, and this Garden is eschatologically interpreted in the *Apocalypse of Paul*, whereas the Land of milk and honey is also used to refer to the abundance waiting for the righteous in the future paradise.

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